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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 RPO DUBAI 000363

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SUBJECT: KHAMENEI'S AND AHMADINEJAD'S TALKING POINTS ON POST-ELECTION  
CRACKDOWN

REF: RPO DUBAI 362

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REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In recent public speeches both Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad have each repeated key talking points about the post-election unrest. Both have emphasized that this unrest is the result of a vast long-planned conspiracy by Iran's foreign enemies to besmirch the resounding regime victory in the June 12 vote, and to topple the Islamic Republic from within via a "soft coup." Khamenei has stressed that all violations of the law will be dealt with within the legal process. While admitting that Iranian government officials did violate the law, most noticeably at the Kahrizak detention center and during the June 15 storming of University of Tehran dormitories, he notes that such violations however pale into unimportance relative to the injustices done to the regime by those seeking to topple it. As the September 23 opening of the University School year approaches, Khamenei has also stressed the key role that college students and professors will play on the 'front lines of the Soft War,' while also noting that university-level humanities courses could be another insidious vehicle for the import of Western and secular ideas into Iran. For his part, Ahmadinejad has focused on defending his last four years, while also vowing to continue the fight against high-level corruption amidst the rich and powerful, which many analysts read as an allusion to Ayatollah Rafsanjani and his peers. In distinction to Khamenei, Ahmadinejad has ascribed the Kahrizak and Tehran University incidents to "the enemy." END SUMMARY.

12. (U) Both Supreme Leader Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad have made a number of recent public comments in which they have referred to the post-election unrest, with the major ones as follows:

KHAMENEI AUGUST 26 STUDENT SPEECH

13. (U) On August 26 Supreme Leader Khamenei addressed an Eftar dinner for selected (hardcore conservative) University student groups, with his speech preceded by speeches by representatives of these groups. This was the first time that Khamenei had addressed student groups since the post-election unrest to

include the altercations at Tehran University. The tone of these student speeches was uniformly strident, with the students criticizing virtually every organ of the Iranian government except for the Supreme Leader, to include (inter alia):

- complaining about the June 15 attacks at Tehran University and other universities;

- calling for an investigation of Ayatollah Rafsanjani's son Mehdi Hashemi and the "mafia controlling Azad University" to include its President Abdollah Jasebi, based on the recent confessions made by those being tried for post-election disturbances;

- questioning the loyalty of both the Majlis leadership and the membership of the Expediency Council;

- severely criticizing the performance of President Ahmadinejad, his Ninth Administration, the influence of the "Kordan, Rahimi and Mashaei" clique, and his Tenth Cabinet nominations;

- demanding the expulsion of the British Ambassador from Tehran;

- claiming Presidential candidate Mir Hossin Mousavi and former President Khatami were involved in plots against Iran and called for their being tried in court (which drew loud applause from the student audience).

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14. (U) Khamenei's response to this young audience, composed of many of his most fervent supporters, was that: - Decisive action will be taken against those involved in the post-election disturbances, to include those 'behind the scenes,' but this action must be based on proof and evidence, not on rumors. In this regard, he was not accusing anyone specific of being foreign agents "because such a thing has not been proven to me and I can't talk about something which hasn't been proven" (COMMENT: This statement was seized on by Western press as indicating that Khamenei was in some way exonerating opposition leaders of being foreign agents. In the context of his emphasis on the need for proof, all he was saying was that he could not currently make such a claim, as it had not yet been proved. END COMMENT)

- The incidents at Tehran University and Kahrizak will be dealt with decisively and those who violated the law will be punished, regardless of their organizational affiliation;

- The Kahrizak and Tehran University transgressions were unimportant relative to the injustice done to the Islamic Republic of Iran's reputation due to these post-election disturbances, which besmirched the epic June 12 election.

- Ahmadinejad had his strong and weak points, but as Khamenei does not publicly focus on the deficiencies of government

officials when private correction can be more effective;

- Today the Islamic Republic was involved in a great "soft war," and these students were the young officers on the "front line of this war."

#### KHAMENEI AUGUST 30 UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR SPEECH

15. (U) On August 30 Supreme Leader Khamenei gave a speech to university professors in which he expressed his deep concern with the fact that out of a national university population of 3.5 million, approximately two million were studying humanities, much of which was based on 'Western, materialistic' (vice Islamic) principles. He again alluded to the "Soft War" being waged against Iran, adding that these university professors were the "commanding officers" in this war. He also repeated his 'law and order' statement that the government will deal with all those who have broken the law in the post-election unrest.

#### AHMADINEJAD STATEMENTS

16. (C) At an August 26 Eftar dinner with Executive Branch workers, President Ahmadinejad defended his first term record, saying that his Ninth Administration had gotten a "good grade" from the Supreme Leader and from the Iranian nation, and that in his second term he would continue to work for the people and for justice. He also said that he would continue to fight against corruption and that "the fight against lawbreakers must start with those who imagine themselves as 'owners of the country,'" a phrase that many observers assume refers to Hashemi Rafsanjani.

#### AHMADINEJAD AUGUST 28 FRIDAY PRAYER

17. (U) On Friday August 28 President Ahmadinejad spoke at Tehran's Friday Prayers (NOTE: Normally he wouldn't speak, but because it was government week he and other senior administration officials spoke at various Friday Prayer events). His speech largely extolled his efforts and achievements over

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the previous four years. Concerning the election and the post-election disturbances, he also described a vast Western-led conspiracy which mobilized all its resources, both inside and outside Iran, to derail the Revolution via the most recent Presidential elections. Addressing those 'Satans' behind this plan, he added that Iran would agree to talk and deal with them only if they acted honestly and made up for these actions; otherwise Iran would deal severely with them.

18. (C) In contrast to what Supreme Leader Khamenei said two days earlier, Ahmadinejad claimed that the Kahrizak and Tehran University atrocities were part of the "enemy's scenario" and done by those seeking to overthrow the government (COMMENT: Although Ahmadinejad's comments on the culpability for Kahrizak and Tehran University are incongruent with Khamenei's, from the overall context it seems unlikely that he is publicly challenging the Supreme Leader: it is more a difference in rhetoric). As in his earlier speech, Ahmadinejad again vowed to take the fight to rich and powerful lawbreakers (read: Rafsanjani), saying that "if the holders of power and influence

are exempt from punishment and only the weak are punished, " the Islamic Republic would not endure.

¶9. (C) COMMENT: Both Khamenei's and Ahmadinejad's public position is that the post-election unrest is due to a vast western-led conspiracy to topple the Islamic Republic from within, as part of a "soft war" or "velvet revolution." While there is some daylight between these two on smaller issues such as culpability for incidents at Kahrizak and Tehran University, it doesn't seem that this is as yet a significant source of tension between them. However, given the nature of their collective base of support, it is a real question as to what extent those government entities responsible for these actions will be prosecuted (according to some reformist websites, at least some of those removed from Kahrizak for these violations have quietly returned to work). If contemporary Iranian history is a guide, then it is likely that a few 'bad apples' will be identified and sacrificed for the greater good, much like the case of Intelligence Ministry official Saeed Imami, who took the fall for the 1990s 'Serial Murders' of dissident Iranian intellectuals, and then 'committed suicide' in prison. Indeed, the recent Judiciary announcement that an investigative committee is being formed to look into post-election unrest (reftel) could be to be laying the groundwork for such a strategy. However, Khamenei faces the delicate balancing act of trying to find a scapegoat for these violations who is high enough to be credible to those aggrieved elites offended by these transgressions but low enough not to alienate the IRGC intel/security cabal whose support he finds essential.

¶10. (C) It is worth noting however that the 'show trials' of those rounded up after the election are still ongoing, and no one within the ruling elite has disputed the veracity of the confessions being extracted from key defendants. Indeed, as many IRPO interlocutors point out, the key dynamic playing out right now is between Khamenei and Ahmadinejad on the one hand and Rafsanjani on the other, with Rafsanjani supporting Mousavi, Khatami and Karrubi behind the scenes while also seeking to rally the clerical elite against Supreme Leader Khamenei and Ahmadinejad. As such, the trial 'confessions' that implicate Rafsanjani's son Mehdi in various illegalities are a key tool in this ongoing struggle. END COMMENT.  
EYRE